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Commencement Then and Now

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By 1885, only 17 of Penn Vet’s first 29 matriculants—now in their second year of the three-year program—remained, a reduction mainly due to academic failures. During their first year, the students learned chemistry, pharmacy, histology, applied botany, zoology, anatomy and forging. The second year bridged basic studies and the clinical work of the following year, and included new courses in medical chemistry, internal pathology and contagious diseases and practical farriery. Thirteen students began their third year of work in therapeutics, general pathology and morbid anatomy, surgical pathology and operative surgery, internal pathology and contagious diseases, sanitary police (hygiene), obstetrics and zootechnics. Considering the lack of formal education of most of the students, this was a difficult schedule; only 10 students stood in Penn Vet’s first graduating class in 1887.
The 123rd Commencement Exercises of the School of Veterinary Medicine were conducted May 19, 2008. The commencement address was given by Lisa Freeman, DVM, PhD, and the veterinarian’s oath was administered by Robert Feterman, V’90, president of the Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association. The Class of 2008 numbers 105 and is composed of 85 women and 20 men. With the Class of 2008, Penn Vet has graduated 6,479 veterinarians.

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